

LATCH Makes Child Safety Seat Installation As Easy As 1, 2, 3

What is LATCH? (Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children)

LATCH is a system that makes child safety seat installation easier—without using seat belts. LATCH is required on child safety seats and most vehicles manufactured after September 1, 2002. LATCH is not required for booster seats, car beds, and vests.

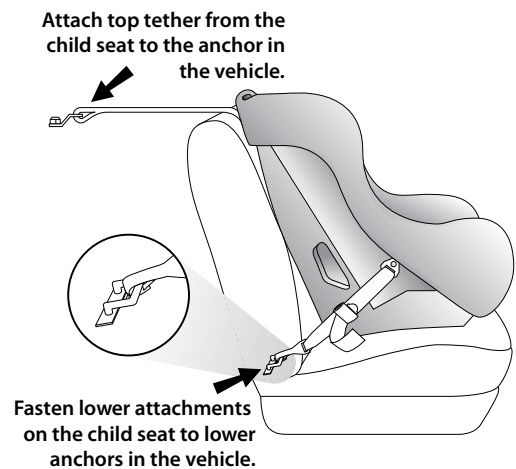
How does LATCH work?

LATCH-equipped vehicles have at least two sets of small bars, called anchors, located in the back seat where the cushions meet. LATCH-equipped child safety seats have a lower set of attachments that fasten to these vehicle anchors. Most forward-facing child safety seats also have a top strap (top tether), that attaches to an anchor in the vehicle. Together, they make up the LATCH system.

How do you install a LATCH-equipped child seat?

1. **ALWAYS** read and follow the vehicle owner's manual and child safety seat manufacturer's instructions for correct installation and proper use.
2. Fasten the child safety seat's lower attachments to the vehicle's lower anchors. Tighten and adjust according to the instructions and check for a secure fit.
3. Attach the child safety seat's top tether to the vehicle's anchor and pull to tighten. The child safety seat should not move more than an inch forward or sideways. NOTE: Tethers are not used on most rear-facing child safety seats.

NOTE: Most vehicles will have lower anchors in the left and right rear seat positions. If there aren't anchors in the center seat position, you can still safely install any child safety seat using a seat belt.



What if the child safety seat is an older seat that isn't LATCH-equipped?

These seats must meet the same high standards and are safe if: they are installed according to the vehicle owner's manual and child safety seat manufacturer's instructions, haven't been recalled, and haven't been damaged. Child safety seats that don't have LATCH should be installed using seat belts, even in LATCH-equipped vehicles.

Before installing an older child safety seat, refer to the manufacturer's instructions regarding how long the seat may be used.

What if a vehicle isn't LATCH-equipped?

Any child safety seat can be safely installed using a seat belt and, if available, a top tether, following the vehicle owner's manual and child safety seat manufacturer's instructions. If the vehicle doesn't have a top anchor, contact the manufacturer or dealership to see if it can be retrofitted.

Remember, children are safest when properly restrained in the back seat.

For a child safety seat inspection by a certified technician, call **1-866-SEAT-CHECK** or visit **www.seatcheck.org**.

For more information, visit **www.nhtsa.gov**.



U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

